

After students have finished reading a novel, a play, or an anthology, refer to this list of alternatives to a book report.

Narrative Point of View

Have students select a scene or episode from the book and rewrite it using a different narrative point of view. As a prewriting activity, encourage students to identify the point of view in the original selection and to discuss the characteristics of this narrative perspective and of the narrative point of view they will use in their own story.

Interview Questions

Have pairs of students work together to create a list of eight to ten questions to ask one of the main characters from a book that both students have read. Alternatively, the students can write the questions to ask the author of the book. Students should role-play the interview, with students reversing roles and playing both the interviewer and the character or author answering the questions.

Pantomime

Have small groups of students select a scene or episode from a book to pantomime by using gestures and facial expressions. Ask them to present their pantomimes in class, and have other students identify what is happening in the pantomime.

Storyboard

Have small groups of students create a storyboard that outlines the main events in the novel for a movie version of the book. Display the storyboards in class, and discuss the similarities and differences between the screen version and the original book.

Newspaper Article

Ask students to select a major event in the book and write a newspaper article about the incident. The news story should be written for a periodical that would have been published at the time of the story. Post the article on a class bulletin board.

Historical Research

Have students research the historical period in which the story was set. Students can present their findings in a variety of formats,

including a series of eight to ten newspaper headlines focusing on key events of the period; a three- to five-page report about the period; or a series of first-person written narratives from the point of view of a student living during that historical period. Call on volunteers to present their research projects in class.

Debate

Stage a debate in which small groups of students who have read the same book debate an issue that played a key role in the plot of the story. Other students can ask the debaters questions about their views on the topic at the end of the debate.

Movie Script

Have students select a scene or an episode from the book to use as the basis of a movie script. They should include detailed camera instructions and descriptions of the sets as well as dialogue. Point out that the dialogue should include the characters' words from the book along with additional dialogue written by the students. Refer students to a book about screenplay or teleplay formatting from your school library if necessary.

Video Game Design

Students can design a video game based on the books they read. The project should include a cover sheet, in which students describe the game and name it. They should also present a series of sketches showing what the game will look like and how it will be played.

Letter to the Author

Encourage students to respond to the story by writing a letter to the author. In the letter, students should explain whether or not they found the story believable and how they responded to the characters and their problems.

Journal Entries

Students should write a series of three journal entries by their favorite character in the book that reflects his or her feelings about an important event or series of events in the story. Remind students to write the journal entry in that character's voice.

Book Report Alternatives

Epilogue

Have students write an epilogue to the book that extends the story. The epilogue should include characters from the book who are in a new situation or facing a new conflict that is related to events in the story. Call on volunteers to read their epilogue in small groups or to the entire class.

Books on Film

If a movie or telefilm version of the book was produced, screen it in class. Encourage students to compare the book and film versions of the same story. Students should then identify the actors whom they would cast in the roles of the major characters from the book if a movie or telefilm were being produced today.

Travel Poster

Students should research the setting of the book. Then, have them create travel posters advertising the setting or encouraging people to move there. Display the completed posters in class.

Interview

Have students research the author's life. Student pairs can then role-play interviews between a newspaper reporter and the author shortly after the publication of the book. They should take turns reversing roles in the role play. Call on volunteers to present their role plays in class.

Dramatization

Have small groups of students dramatize a scene from the book. Students can act, write, direct, and produce the dramatization. Encourage them to select appropriate background music to help create the mood of the drama.

Book Jacket

Have students design a book jacket for the book. As a preparatory activity, encourage students to discuss book jackets from books in your school and classroom library and identify elements that they like about each one. Display the completed book jackets in class.

Timeline

Encourage students to create a timeline of important events from the book. The timeline should include the date (or approximate date) of the event, a brief description, and an illustration. Display the timelines in class.

Story Map

Students can create a story map to represent the main events in the story. The story map should include the details of the exposition, including the setting, the main characters, a one-sentence summary of the basic situation, and a description of the conflict; the main events in the rising action; the climax; the main events in the falling action; and the resolution.

World Events Timeline

Students can research world events that might have influenced the author. Encourage students to present this information on a timeline that identifies the world event and shows a link between it and the author's life.

Poetry

Have students discuss figurative language in the book, including similes, metaphors, personifications, and descriptive passages that were particularly moving. Then, ask students to write a poem in response to the book. The poem can be lyric, epic, narrative, or dramatic. Call on volunteers to read their poems aloud in small groups.

Letters

Have students write a series of letters between two of the characters in the book, in which each responds to an event in the story. Call on volunteers to read their letters aloud in small groups.

Résumé

Have students select one of the major characters from the story and write a résumé for that character. The résumé should include pertinent information about that character's life, experiences, educational background, and job goals. Ask students who have read the same book to discuss their résumés in small groups.

Collage

Encourage students to create a collage with images from newspapers and magazines, as well as original designs, in response to a book they have read. The collage might express the experiences of a particular character or illustrate the events in a key episode or event. Encourage students to display and discuss their collages.

Travel Log

Have students write a log of a character's journey through the book. The entries in the travel log should include a description of the setting of key events from the story and the actions of the characters. Call on volunteers to read their travel logs aloud in small groups.

Newspaper or Magazine Ad

Have students create a newspaper or magazine ad for the book that includes both an exciting visual and a catchy slogan line to interest potential readers. Display the completed ads in class. Discuss similarities and differences between advertisements for the same book.

Panel Discussion

Encourage several students who have read the same book to discuss their reactions in a panel discussion. Another student can act as the panel moderator. The other students should ask the panel members questions at the conclusion of the discussion.

Speech

Have students write a speech by a major character in the book. The speech can be written to follow the climax of the story; to defend his or her actions in the story; to defend another character; to inspire action; or to defend the story. Call on students to role-play the character as they present their speeches in class.

Multimedia Presentation

Have students create a multimedia presentation about some aspect of the work they have read. Among the media students can use are written materials, a slide show, a video, an oral or audiocassette presentation, sound effects, music, art, photographs, models, charts, and diagrams. Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups to research and put together their final products.